

Application No. 10/002,772
Response to Final Office Action

Customer No. 01933

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE CLAIMS

Independent claims 1, 12 and 22 have been amended to clarify the features of the present invention whereby a plurality of image forming apparatuses of a plurality of users are accessed through a computer network to acquire information on the apparatuses of the users, and whereby information is generated on the image forming apparatuses that require a part change, such that a total number of parts to be changed is calculated based on the information on the apparatuses that require the part change. See Figs. 1 and 4, and the disclosure in the specification at page 4, lines 7-12 and page 8, lines 24-26.

In addition, independent claims 1, 12 and 22 have also been amended to recite the feature of the present invention whereby the information on the apparatuses comprises count data of at least one of printing and copying, as supported by the disclosure in the specification at page 6, lines 7-10.

Still further, claims 4, 6-11, 15, 17-21, 25 and 27-30 have been amended to better accord with amended independent claims 1, 12 and 22.

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No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to claims 1, 4, 6-12, 15, 17-22, 25 and 27-30 be approved and entered.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 1, 4-12, 15-22 and 25-33 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of previously cited US 2002/0156692 ("Squeglia et al"). This rejection, however, is respectfully traversed with respect to the claims as amended hereinabove.

According to the present invention as recited in amended independent claims 1, 12 and 22, a plurality of image forming apparatuses are accessed to acquire information on the apparatuses, and information on a part to be changed is acquired from image forming apparatuses that require the part change. Information is generated on (the plurality of) image forming apparatuses that require the part change, based on the information on the apparatuses of the users and the information on the part to be changed. The information on the apparatuses that require the part change is provided to a terminal operated by a maintenance administrator, and a total number of parts to be changed is calculated based on the information on the apparatuses that require the part change.

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That is, according to the present invention as recited in amended independent claims 1, 12 and 22, the total number of parts to be changed is calculated based on information acquired from a plurality of apparatuses.

Thus, with the structure of the claimed present invention, it is possible to easily determine a required number of parts and to immediately send orders for replacement parts.

By contrast, it is respectfully submitted that Squeglia et al merely discloses one-by-one communication between a locomotive and an administrator for determining the required maintenance on the one locomotive.

In addition, it is respectfully pointed out that according to the present invention as recited in amended independent claims 1, 12 and 22, the information on the apparatuses comprises count data of at least one of printing and copying. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claims 1, 12 and 22 even more clearly clarify that the claimed present invention is directed to image forming apparatuses, rather than the locomotives of Squeglia et al.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claims 1, 12 and 22, as well as claims 4-11, 15-21 and 25-33 respectively depending therefrom, all patentably distinguish over Squeglia et al under 35 USC 103.

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Entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number given below for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,



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